

SERMON  
ON  
THE DEATH  
OF  
REV. JAMES M. CHILES,

PREACHED AT  
HONES TUBOOL, ABBEVILLE DISTRICT, S. C.

ON  
TUESDAY, 20th OF MARCH, 1863.

BY  
REV. JAMES C. FURMAN, D. D.

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PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CHURCH.

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GREENVILLE, S. C.  
G. E. ELFORD'S PRESS.

1863



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SERMON

ON

THE DEATH

OF

REV. JAMES M. CHILES,

PREACHED AT

HOREB CHURCH, ABBEVILLE DISTRICT, S. C.

ON

SUNDAY, 29th OF MARCH, 1863.

BY

REV. JAMES C. FURMAN, D. D.

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PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CHURCH.

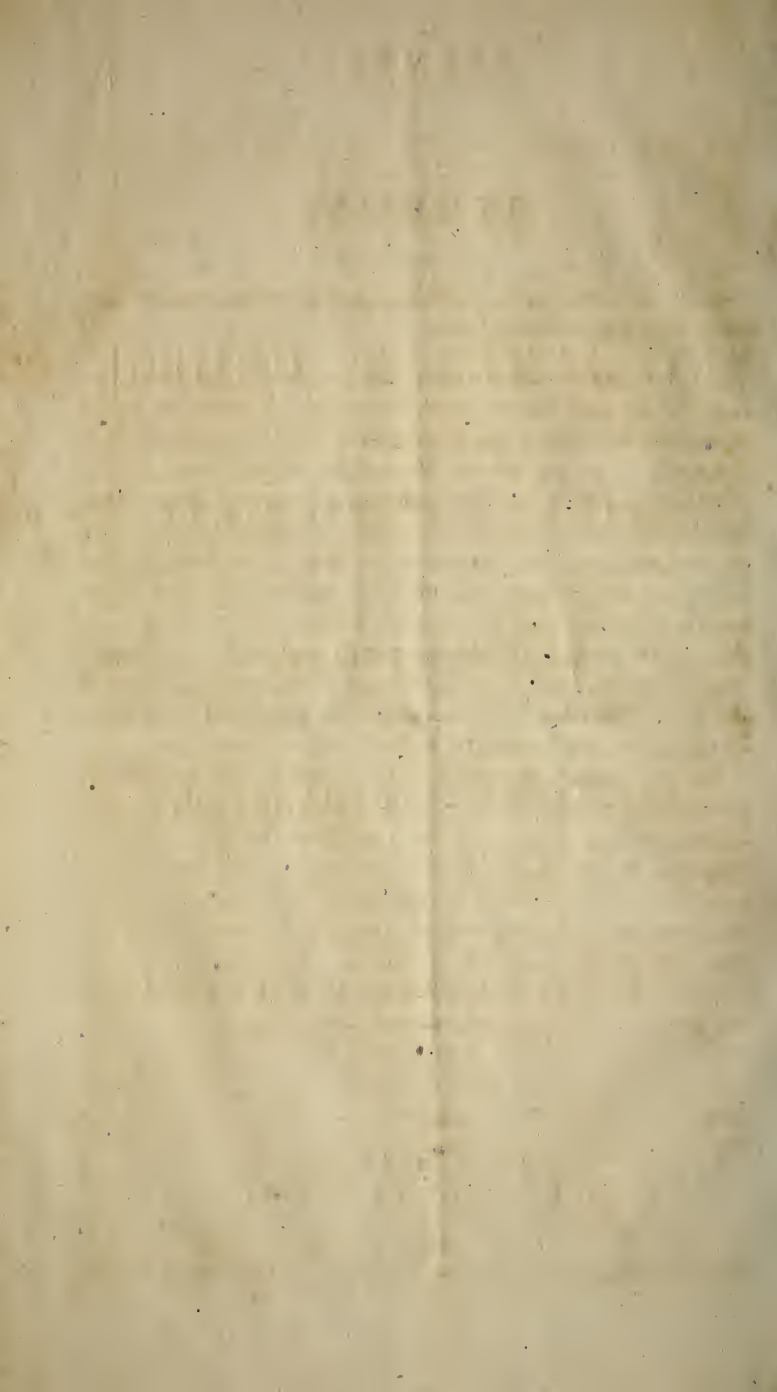
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## SERMON:

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NAHUM, 1: 7—The Lord is good, a stronghold in the time of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him.

THE text forms a part of a remarkable prophecy of the destruction of one of the most famous cities of antiquity. Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire, was the largest of the then existing cities of the world. Covering a space fifteen miles in length and nine in width, and gathering into itself the wealth of surrounding regions, it was, as large cities are apt to be, the abode of impiety and sin. On a previous occasion, from one hundred and fifty to two hundred years before, another prophecy, with which the readers of the New Testament are familiar, from our Saviour's allusion to it, was uttered by the prophet Jonah. "Thirty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed," were the terrible words by which the man of God aroused the fears of the guilty Ninevites. The destruction thus announced was averted by the general and profound humiliation of the inhabitants.

But sins, though once repented of, if repeated and persisted in, produce their natural results. The blow once suspended is about to fall on the head of a people whose iniquities are full. Nahum is employed to predict the coming destruction. His prophecy is regarded by the critics as a finished poem. The exordium, within which our text is formed, contains a majestic and sublime description of the attributes and acts of Jehovah. Some of the touches in this grand picture demand a passing notice. Thus, in the very opening, he says, "God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth," &c. Here two words are used which have come to be most generally understood in a bad sense, as when we say of another, "he is a jealous man," or "he will take revenge for injury done him." But the meanings attached to these terms are not the necessary, nor, indeed, the original meanings. As the word "passion," in the colloquial expression, "he was in a passion," has come to signify the violent exercise of irascible feelings, yet, in its primary signification, only denotes strong emotion, as when we speak of the passion of love or



hatred, of pity or resentment, so here the words employed are to be understood without the qualification which usually attaches to them. In fact, we still use the word *jealous* in such connections as exclude all suspicion of an improper quality, as when we describe a man as jealous of his honor. We mean to say only, but to say strongly, that he preserves his honor with the scrupulous regard which only a man of high integrity can feel. It is in this sense that God employs the term as descriptive of Himself, in the sanction by which He enforces the Second Commandment, "For I, the Lord, thy God, am a jealous God, visiting," &c. : it is intended to teach the impossibility of offenders escaping with impunity, because of God's just and necessary regard to his own glory. In like manner, revenge, in the depraved and selfish condition of our fallen nature, almost certainly degenerates into a fell and malignant passion. Its indulgence, therefore, is denied to us, in our individual cases and relations, but is yet allowed to civil society. Thus the apostle Paul declares the civil magistrate to be "the minister of God, an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."—*Rom. xii: 4*. Now, this Divine warrant for the exercise of revenge in a particular instance, proves that it is not wrong in itself, essentially. Nay, more; the inspired Word teaches, by implication, that without it the exercise of God's justice towards offenders at the last day would be impossible. "Is God unrighteous that taketh vengeance? How, then, shall God judge the world?" It is, then, righteous vengeance—necessary because right, and so terrible because thus necessary— which is to take hold upon the enemies of a holy God.

Along with these terms, thus explained, and guarded against misconception, the preface of this prediction stands crowded with images sublimely descriptive of God's power and agency. Actual *natural* phenomena, forms of actual *miraculous* interposition, and then other forms of the exercise of omnipotence, are instanced. Of such natural phenomena, tempest and drought are specified. Are the elements torn and convulsed by the rush of mighty winds? It is God who has his way in the whirlwind, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. He seals up the clouds, and "a fruitful land is turned into barrenness for the wickedness of them that dwell therein." The case which the prophet gives, affords us the most vivid picture. It is Carmel, Lebanon, Bashan, visited with drought,

and fainting under the touch of the Divine rebuke. Of the last of these, (Bashan,) an English traveller (Buckingham) says:

“We continued our way over this elevated tract, continuing to behold with surprise and admiration a beautiful country on all sides of us: its plains covered with a fertile soil, its hills clothed with forests, and at every turn presenting the most magnificent landscapes that could be imagined.” “Lofty mountains gave an outline of the most magnificent character; flowing beds of secondary hills softened the romantic wildness of the picture; gentle slopes, clothed with wood, gave a rich variety of tints, hardly to be imitated by the pencil; deep valleys, filled with murmuring streams and verdant meadows, offered all the luxuriance of cultivation, and herds and flocks gave life and animation to scenes as grand, as beautiful, and as highly picturesque, as the genius or the taste of a Claude could either invent or desire.”

In consonance with this are the Scriptural allusions to the “strong bulls of Bashan,” an effect, and therefore a sign, of fertility and abundance. But when God sees fit, the rich, productive soil denies their maintenance to man and beast.—The drying up of rivers and of seas seems not improbably to look to those stupendous occasions when Israel and their enemies together, but from different points, became, the one the preserved and wondering, the other the astounded and perishing spectators of wonders achieved by the arm of the Almighty made bare.—In the conjoined imagery, the rapt mind of the Prophet dwells upon other *imaginable* displays of the same omnipotent energy at work to destroy — mountains quaking, hills melted, the earth and its inhabitants burning before the presence of God, his anger being poured forth like fire.

In this grand and awful exhibition of Divine attributes are intermingled some of those gracious assurances — those revelations of other attributes of Jehovah — which make Him the object of love and hope, as well as of fear. Like the fringe of silver upon the skirt of a portentous cloud, where the edging of light only makes the rolling blackness beneath more black, they are intended, by the antithesis, to make the dismal ruin which these threatenings denounce still more palpable. Thus, God’s slowness to anger will make that anger only the more fearful when it comes. It will be the bursting of a flood sweeping with more destructive violence, because it has been pent up from an earlier overflow, and raised to a higher head.

So the Apostle Paul represents the despisers of God's goodness and long-suffering and forbearance, as heaping up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath and of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God. In like manner, the language of the text, while it asserts the Divine benevolence in the safety given to those who trust in Him, admonishes us by the contrast, how hopeless, how remediless, must be the ruin of those who not only have no security in God, but must even meet Him as an enemy, in unequal contest with the Omnipotent, like the crackling thorns resisting the fire, or the dust of the summer threshing-floor the whirlwind.

But it is not our purpose to-day to consider the views thus placed in contrast with the text, but the text itself as thus related to the other representation of which it forms a part. Thus viewed, it contains a great truth, always precious, and specially applicable to our present circumstances. It represents to our view the good man; and thus considered, it does three things: It gives us, 1st, an obvious fact in his outer condition; 2d, a distinctive description of his character; and 3d, an inestimable privilege of his inner life. In other words, we have three great facts respecting the pious man, relating, the first, to the circumstances of his being—another to his character—and the third to his spiritual immunity. As to his outer condition, he is subject to trouble; as to his character, he puts his trust in God; as to his high privilege, his security is in God himself.

And first: The good man is subject to trouble. To say this of him is involved in saying that he is a man. Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards. In other words, this fact in his experience occurs as certainly as the sequences of a law of nature. It results from causes in himself and from causes external to himself. Look at him *intellectually*: his wisdom and his folly alike occasion trouble. "He that increases knowledge increases sorrow;" and if in some sense, and to some extent, "ignorance is bliss," in another sense, and to a greater extent, it is the prolific source of dangerous error, of mischievous blundering, of painful privation, and often of remediless damage.—Look at his *capacities of enjoyment*: each of them, in turn, is as liable to become the inlet of suffering as it is the inlet of enjoyment. His desires make him vulnerable by disappointment. His hopes are balanced by his fears. His love for others not only endows him with the wealth of exquisite satisfactions, but



makes him "poor indeed," when the just expectations of friendship or of conjugal or parental affection are cruelly mortified by the manifested unworthiness of their objects, or are rudely annihilated by the sundering blow of death.—Look at him *physically*: What sense may not become the avenue of pain and even of agony? The wondrous eye, catching a thousand perfect pictures in an hour upon its retina, for the advantage and amusement of its owner, becomes too sensitive for light, and must withdraw from the bright world into artificial darkness; nay, it becomes shrouded in a perpetual night; and the strong man, who was wont to go where he pleased, now threads his gloomy way, led by a child or a dog. Again, the nerve which, erewhile, in its normal state, quietly and pleasantly subserved its purpose, in the functions of sensation and perception and motion, now starts into a fierce activity, as though it had acquired a serpent's fang and venom, or falling into feebleness, leaves its victim, like Tantalus, before the stream which he could not reach, without hearing in an atmosphere of music or in the full current of conversation, of which he cannot partake; or, again, sinking into an excitable inaction, it leaves the stalwart limb to drop like lead — cut off from the control of the will — dead before its time.

If we look at man in his connection with others, the picture is still the same. Look at him in connection with inferiors and dependants. How much of trouble is often commingled with the feeling of responsibility. To provide for substantial wants, is to many the carking care which eats out the enjoyment of the home of poverty. To give the needed counsel, to present the right example, to bring to bear the true persuasions, and at the right time, by which the young — for instance, even one's own children — may be moved to enter, and entering, to pursue the path of wisdom and virtue, oh, how great a care and trouble is this. And then to know that, in any case, you have not done all that you might have done, and to witness the deleterious consequences of neglect, constantly going on and mingling with the history of a character and life, which, but for your failure in duty, might have been so different and so much better — this, surely, is an item worthy of the name on that list of troubles which make up individual human history. Then, too, our connexion with others involves our contact with the bad. Our property, our reputation, our liberty, our lives, are not out of the reach of avaricious, deceitful,

bloody men. The fraudulent and false individual may make us the victim of his wiles. Unjust popular opinion may rob us of our good name. Hostile armies may desolate our homes; may precipitate families from opulence to poverty; may cause female delicacy which the very winds of heaven never touched rudely, to fly into the strangeness of a strange land to escape the contact of a brutal soldiery, without respect for the sanctity of temples, the infirmity of age, or the purity of woman. Before them the land may have been an Eden; but behind them is a desolate wilderness. The king of Israel, left to the dreadful selection between three evils — war, pestilence and famine — does not hesitate to pray that he and his people may not fall into the hands of men.

But even external nature, ministering so abundantly to our good, may yet occasion our trouble. The horse which accelerates and facilitates his rider's locomotion, may yet break his limb or destroy his life. The fire which cooks our food and cheers the hearthstone, also burns our abodes. The rains which fructify our fields, raise the booming currents which sweep away their richest products. The air which feeds the fire of life, enters our vitals charged with the deadly miasm.

Such is man as man, of few days, but full of trouble, and therefore such is the pious man. His piety constitutes no exemption from the universal liability. Nay, there are reasons which explain why the voice of inspiration declares, "many are the afflictions of the righteous;" as if it had said, the good man is emphatically the man of trouble; for, first, the range of the objects from which his troubles arise is enlarged. It takes in not only the moral, but the spiritual. It embraces not only the life that now is, but the life which is to come. *Sin*, to him, is not a fiction, but a reality — a sore, grievous reality, outweighing all others; and whether seen in himself or in others, he mourns over it with a sorrow which is typified only by the bitter distress of him that mourns over a first-born. Again, the sensibility of the good man's nature is more refined and exquisite. For this reason, Jesus, the immaculate man, suffered from mere contact with men, with an intensity beyond our comprehension; and good men, as they are assimilated to the image of his purity, suffer from like causes in proportionate degree. In addition to this, the opposition from without is enhanced. He who lets men alone in their sins

and vices, is sure to escape that opposition and its attendant trouble which *he* excites who cannot let them alone. He undertakes to do good to the disobedient and rebellious; and even if he does not incur their malediction, yet in many cases he is compelled to witness the failure of his efforts — efforts which leave those in whose behalf they were put forth, more unimpressible than before — and he takes up the lamentation of the prophet, “I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nought and in vain.”—And a fourth reason for this feature in the experience of good men is, that trouble is a part of the designed discipline which schools them for higher virtue, and fits them for Heaven.

But it is time to pass to our text’s distinctive description of a good man’s character — “The Lord knoweth *them that trust in Him.*”

There is one characteristic sentiment common to the good everywhere. Angels in Heaven, saints in glory, and saints on earth, *trust in God.* There is a spurious religious trust, which is not trust in God. The trust of the deist, who reposes in the assurance that God is too good to punish sin, is trust in a fictitious being, and therefore no trust in God. The trust of the Pharisee, while he thanked God that he was not as other men, was a trust in himself. So now men may trust that they are sharers in the Divine favor, who yet do not trust in God; because there is nothing in what God has said or done which warrants the conclusion that they do share His favor. But, on the other hand, there is an actual trust in God. It is an important question, “What is it?”

The idea itself is a simple idea, incapable of definition, not to be understood without experience of the thing signified by it, and capable only of being illustrated by analogous cases. It is the sentiment which lies back of our belief in cases where we believe only because of our confidence in the integrity and veracity of our informant. It is the sentiment which lies back of our repose, when we have confided our property and our very lives to the hands of another, and yet not the very thinnest shadow of a misgiving ever passes over our spirit. It is the spirit of the child which has stood pale and shrinking at the entrance of a long dark passage, but putting its little hand into its father’s hand, walks beside him with the assurance of perfect safety. It is the spirit of affiance, the informing essence of love, the secret of harmony, the very soul of union between



spiritual beings. Trust, trust, beautiful word — blessed thing! All the society of earth that is worth the name, is so because of its presence. Heaven itself is held together in beautiful accord by its blessed potency. It was the loss of trust which carried our first mother to the forbidden tree. It was distrust of God which makes the blackness of darkness forever of the infernal pit. And it is distrust of God which perpetuates the ungodliness of earth, and gives to human degradation and misery their deepest shadows.

Trust in God is exercised toward Jehovah, *considered in Himself*. It rejoices that he is just what he is, and the soul which feels it would rather yield up its own existence than touch an attribute of the infinitely glorious and perfect "I Am." Exercised toward God, *in view of what he has done*, it receives his declarations with unquestioning confidence — as has been said, "takes God at His word." It relies upon His promises as a sufficient ground for hopes to be realized by what shall occur only within the Divine mind, (and so of hopes of forgiveness and acceptance,) or in that unknown region which lies beyond the boundaries of earth and time, (and so of hopes of the resurrection and an everlasting abode with God in glory.) It is this trust in God which underlies the believer's faith in Christ. Guilty, self-condemned, self-despairing, seeing by the light of reason, that there is nothing before him but certain, inevitable, overwhelming destruction, he lays hold, by this faith, on the hope set before him by the Gospel. As no truth is so important, so none appears to him so gloriously sure as that which supports the promises of Divine mercy. Believing that God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor God's ways as our ways, he springs up to the unutterable assurance of a Divine pardon, and rejoices with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. With this experience he is now prepared for a new interpretation of God's providences. Calamities may thicken around, but to the upright there ariseth a light in the darkness. "Content," he sings,

"Content where'er thy hand shall lead,  
The darkest path I'll tread,  
Joyful will leave these mortal shores,  
And mingle with the dead."

"When dreadful guilt is done away,  
No other fears we know;  
That hand which scatters pardons down  
Shall crowns of life bestow."

And this brings us to our third fact, the security of the pious man. The Lord is good.—a stronghold in time of trouble. The imagery is derived from military affairs. The stronghold was the means of defence against the assaults of enemies. It was sometimes artificially constructed; it was sometimes naturally provided, as in the height of mountain fastnesses, inaccessible to an invader. How precious to the poor, persecuted Albigenes were those Alpine retreats, where the feet of their oppressors could not come. But here God himself is the fortress, the rock of absolute safety. “The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe.” “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble: therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled; though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.” Let God defend, and what harm could a universe arrayed against us do? And this *is the* defence of every believer. Let human malignity bring the battery of all untoward circumstances—let infernal malignity spring its mines of deepest hate—yet the believer in Jesus stands secure. He is dead, and his life is hid with Christ in God; no enemy can reach him but through God, his hiding-place. Blessed security! Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

In this connection let me say it is not only the power and veracity of God which produce this security; it originates equally in the tenderness of Divine love. God loves the trusting heart for its very trust. Did you never remark how conspicuous trust moves the heart of the trusted to its very depths. We instinctively shrink from the thought of wounding, by disappointment, a trusting heart. The nature which thus feels, God has given us, and it is but a reflection of his own benignant heart. And can God fail the confiding spirit that goes to him, that leans upon him, that says in the beautiful simplicity of its repose on the Divine faithfulness, “All my expectation is from Him?” “My God; in him will I trust?” No! No! No! Listen, listen to the words of the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck



them out of my Father's hand." Heaven and earth may pass away, but not one jot or one tittle of these words shall fail.

We have thus looked at the good man in his outward circumstances — in his high character — in his certain destiny.

Of such a man it is our pleasing, yet mournful office, to gather up some brief memorials. To your former loved and revered Pastor, the doctrine of our text you could all attest as distinctly and emphatically applicable. I might, then, close this discourse, leaving it to your knowledge and feelings to apply to the individual case what I have spoken in the general; more especially when I see not only the large concourse of members of the denomination to which he belonged, but the presence of other pious men and of ministers of other communions, thus spontaneously and affectingly acknowledging the great Christian excellence of our loved and lamented brother. But it is perhaps proper that I should add some expression, however imperfect, of my own estimate of his character and worth.

Looked at as a whole, his character presented an assemblage of traits evenly balanced and smoothly blended. With a single slight exception, no quality appeared in excess. The beholder was impressed with the symmetry of a well-proportioned figure, free from all excrescence or distortion, or unsightly development of a single part. He was calm and self-possessed, but not cold or phlegmatic. He was bold without presumption; decided, but not obstinate. He was humble, with no tinge of servility or sycophancy; tender and sympathizing, but not effeminate. He was guileless, and not only eschewed but abhorred all artifice and pretence; and here occurred the slight deficiency to which I have alluded — a "failing that leaned to virtue's side" — the confiding generosity of his nature made him too slow to detect guile in others. He was exactly and scrupulously truthful, but he did not make candor a cover for bitterness; and he spoke painful truths only when it was necessary. He did not act upon impulse, and yet in all he did was seen the man of feeling. His movements were not those of a skiff, one-while with full-blown sail skudding before the wind, and, may-be, passing its proper point, and then flapping its unfilled sail and drifting with the current. They were rather those of the steadfast steamer, moving by a power from within, and independent alike of the winds and tides.

Such was his character, considered as a whole. Let us briefly contemplate it in some of its parts. And

First. He was gifted with that inestimable attribute, *strong common sense*. No one could form his acquaintance without perceiving that he had come in contact with a man of sound, solid judgment. In the general conduct of life, this power qualifies its possessor to make a selection of proper ends, and to adapt suitable means to the accomplishment of those ends. When once the sphere of his action is selected, it keeps him moving regularly in his own orbit. In any department of life its influence is most important in the power which it involves of forming accurate judgments in regard to men — but nowhere more important than in the work of the ministry, where the objects on which the workman operates are human beings, with all their infinite diversities of tastes, capacities and susceptibilities. In the absence of this quality, the occupant of the ministry may make himself the favorite of a particular class; while between him and other classes there is very little contact, and still less sympathy. But the minister who is endowed as our lamented brother was, practically adapts himself to each, and so to all. The work of adapting himself to individuals, with all their varied and often opposite characters, is done as if by instinct, readily and successfully. The instructions of such a minister meet the wants of the thinking and the cultivated, and yet do not omit to provide for the ruder and more undeveloped class of minds; and in his intercourse he is alike an object of attraction and interest to the energetic and active, driving with the vigor of their full strength at the great objects of busy life; to the aged, resting in the quietude of life's evening; and to the young, with all their curiosity, their inexperience, and their fresh and budding feelings.

Second. Intimately connected with this was marked *self-respect*. The absence of this quality in those who fill the office of the sacred ministry, is seen more frequently in the form of an unseemly levity. We are far from maintaining that there is anything in the habits of minds engendered by a proper pursuit of the minister's work, which destroys a minister's relish for real wit, or renders him insensible to genuine humor. Nay, we even believe that the power of pathetic representation is in a great degree the very power which perceives the analogies which, in the case of wit, surprise and amuse

us ; but with these admissions, it is yet true that there is a dignity and gravity appropriate to the office which would even be offended at wit itself, *out of place*, or inordinately indulged. So little sympathy had our beloved brother for the temper of those who "court a grin where they should woo a soul," that I remember to have heard him (when himself but a beginner) mention, with strong disapprobation, some instance of levity in an announcement from the pulpit, which had passed under his own eye. To a mind like his, the office he filled was invested with too much solemn responsibility, and was connected with associations too sacred, and contemplated issues too important and tremendous, to allow his exercising it in any other spirit than that of profound gravity and self-control. Entering it in the very greenness of his youth, he magnified his office, and showed that he had felt the weight of the Apostle's admonition to a young minister of early times : "Let no man despise thy youth." Through the course of more than thirty years such was the manner in which he always appeared. Far removed from every thing little, as from everything low, he moved among you a man of God — without vanity, but full of self-respect, undesignedly challenging and winning the respect of all.

There is a gravity in some characters which is the result of other qualities, drawn with a sort of mathematical rigidity. The impassive features of such persons never catch a smile but as the rock does the sunshine, reflecting but never feeling it, the same impervious, unsoftened material before and afterwards. Such was not the gravity of our brother ; for,

Third. His heart was the abode of deep and tender sympathies. His self-respect, as we have defined it, being anything else than a form of selfishness, sprung from a source which yielded equally a true respect for others. He could not have been placed in circumstances in which he would have felt that any being having the human nature and thrown in his way was yet devoid of all claim upon him. His bosom glowed with a genuine philanthropy. It was under the influence of such feelings, quickened by the power of the Holy Spirit, that he yielded himself to the work of the ministry. He could not but have seen that this was a surrender of reasonable prospects of worldly gain. In any other employment, possessed of the advantages of patrimony, social position, vigorous health, educa-



tion and mental energy, the way was open before him to the acquisition of wealth and its attendant advantages. But upon such prospect, he turned his back, to take his place with an ill-requited class ; because with them he could best indulge the holy passion of love to the souls of men.

His affections exhibited themselves in uncommon beauty, as developed in the domestic and the more private social relations.

*As a son.* His filial dutifulness was conspicuous. I well remember, in my own case, the desire to see his excellent and venerated father, produced by the affectionate and reverential manner in which the son was accustomed to refer to him.

*As a brother.* He had a heart to feel to the full the force of the motive by which Jacob sought to bind his sons in brotherly accord. Utterly foreign to his nature was the imperious spirit which sometimes in an elder brother makes the fraternal bond chafe the feelings of younger members of the circle. His generous, sympathizing nature gave it at once the strength, the beauty and the softness of a silken cord.

*As a parent.* He reigned in his family by the sweet, silent influence of reciprocated affections. He taught his children to respect themselves by the respect he paid them. It was delightful to witness the beautiful affectionateness of his manner, and the blended confidence and respect which was its natural return. The last action of his life was the mission of parental solicitude, which carried him to the distant bedside of a wounded son — to be borne back, alas ! by that very son, to his own last resting place.

*As a husband.* It would be difficult to over-state the reality respecting his conjugal affection. The most considerate and delicate attentions marked his married life. He never forgot for a moment the happiness which had been committed to his keeping. Nay, to promote it, he sacrificed cheerfully other occasions and means of enjoyment which he dearly valued.

*As a friend.* I am entitled to speak of him from an experience of more than thirty years. In all that time I never saw anything but the most perfect frankness and the most genuine cordiality. Thrown together when we were each on the threshold of manhood, he honored me with his confidence ; and, though several long intervals of absence occurred, I never met him without perceiving that

the attachment of youth was as green and vigorous as ever. Not one hour of shyness or indifference ever marred our intercourse; and in that intercourse he was as pure and devoted as he was frank and cordial. I never heard a sentiment from his lips which would have seemed unfit upon a dying bed.

This brings us naturally to remark upon,

Fourth. His deep religious spirit. This was apparent (1.) In his conscientiousness. What he believed to be right he did, irrespective of consequences. Desiring the esteem of good men, he never swerved a hair's breadth from the line of acknowledged duty, in order to secure the good opinion of any one. He was no popularity-hunter. No man, indeed, in the districts where he had lived and labored, was held in higher repute; but reputation came to him without his seeking—it was the attendant shadow of living worth. If others deserved blame, painful though it was to his sensitive nature, he yet administered the needed rebuke. I remember to have heard him administer such a rebuke to a popular candidate, who was present at an Associational meeting, and in the excess of his political zeal was turning a great religious opportunity into an occasion for promoting mere secular ends. Our brother felt it to be wrong, and at the risk of offending he faithfully remonstrated against the evil. He desecated less freely and frequently than some others upon topics on which he differed from other Christians; but this did not proceed from a want of moral courage, or from an imperfect action of his conscience. He did not abstain from any indifference to the truth, or from a pusillanimous desire to avoid the consequences of asserting it. He abstained, because he rightly estimated the strength of prejudice, even in good men, and appreciated the obstacle which it opposes to the entrance of truth.

(2.) His deeply religious spirit was apparent in his habitual devoutness. He read his Bible not as an intellectual pastime, but to feed the spirit of devotion, and he gave himself to prayer. It was impossible to hear his earnest pleadings, his earnest, child-like breathings into the ear of God, without feeling assured that, like Enoch, he "walked with God."

(3.) His piety gave an unction to his preaching. It sustained his earnestness and gave power to his persuasions. In the work of the ministry he delighted as in a native element. In the judgment of



others he may have been too inattentive to his temporal interests, but it was because the love of Christ constrained him. "Never," says one who knew him most intimately, "did he seem so happy as when endeavoring to lead sinners to Jesus;" and the testimony of judicious observers is that the churches under his care showed the effect of his pious labors in the increased and sustained tone of their spirituality. Men not given to hasty utterances have said that they never knew a minister more deeply and constantly devoted to his pious work; and now, after several years of absence from the State, there is many a house in which the news of his death has awakened an exquisite sense of bereavement, and the thought that he is no more to be welcomed at the threshold, brings with it a painful gloom.

I have thus presented an outline sketch of an amiable and admirable ministerial character, a full portraiture of which would require more individual facts than I command.

I have spoken of him under great disadvantages, growing out of the fact that the separateness of our respective fields of labor cut me off for many years from personal observation of the minute details of his life; and the health of his family during a large portion of these years prevented those reunions at our annual religious assemblies which afford to ministers the precious opportunity of burnishing into fresh brightness the recollections of early years, and sharing with each other their experiences in the work of the Lord. The circumstances, too, since I received the request to perform this service, have not allowed my availing myself, to any extent, of information to be derived from others.

On the other hand, I have spoken with the advantage of addressing those who were familiar with his life and character, and who, if the qualities of his character have been presented in the most general and therefore least impressive way, were yet able to vivify every vague statement, and to fill up with many and many an apt illustration what the speaker had presented in general terms. We are in the very neighborhood where his little feet were taught to trace their early steps to the house of God; where he first uttered in the ear of God's people the grateful invitation, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he has done for my soul;" where he first put on Christ in that solemn rite, which, by a definite

external act, declares the subject's belief in the spiritual resurrection of the soul and the future resurrection of the body, founded on the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus; where he first warned sinners of the wrath to come, and lifted up his voice tenderly to persuade them to fly to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world; where venerable men of God, Belcher and Todd, Johnson and Rice, took part in his solemn induction into the ranks of fully accredited ministers; where, through long successive years, he has done the work, and borne the trials, and enjoyed the rewards, of a faithful, zealous, blameless, useful minister of the Lord Jesus.

How many crowding recollections rise in your memories at the recital of these simple words. One remembers that the words of our dear departed brother once entered his soul as a barbed arrow, there to remain deep-infixed until in the process of a genuine repentance the hand of Divine mercy "solicited the dart" and healed the wounded spirit. Another recalls that when his soul was cast down within him, and God and man were joined in his terrible condemnation; when all behind was shame and all before was fear, the assuring voice, now alas! to be heard no more, uttered the words of gracious promise — when, lo! the darkness broke, and Christian hope, like a golden dawn, burst upon the soul. Here one remembers that when hesitating and faltering about the first step in a public Christian profession, that well-known, faithful voice chided the delay or removed the stumbling-block which seemed to close up the path of duty. The memory of another recalls some erring step retraced under the influence of a kind rebuke; it may be some delinquency corrected at his earnest exhortation, some sore temptation broken, or some burden of affliction lightened by his true and tender words. To how many of you are all the sweet associations of your wedded life connected with the loved presence of him who invoked God's blessings on the nuptial bands. Many of you he baptized — you and your children — and to many of you he was the kind, tender, sympathizing friend, who stood with you at the bedside of your sick and dying, and helped the faith of your departed kindred, as they went down into the valley of the shadow of death.

He is not here to-day to speak to you in those tones so familiar that you can easily imagine them reverberating along these walls. But he speaks to you in the varied reminiscences of a well-spent life,

of a faithful ministry. Nay, he speaks to you in the text which we have been considering this day; for it was selected by himself for this occasion. The selection of such a text is an exhibition in death of the beautiful humility of his life. Other passages would have afforded the preacher a more natural starting point for a eulogy of the dead. But in the spirit of his whole ministry, which aimed not at self-aggrandizement, but at the exaltation of his Lord and Master, anticipating, as he could not but do, that his death would be made the occasion of public religious services, his meek and humble spirit chose as the theme of discourse a passage of the word of God which would allow of an allusion to himself only so far as it might tend to magnify the grace of God. Thus considered, the text is instructive as well by its silence as by what it says. On the one hand it says, "Let God alone be exalted." On the other, it points us to the life and the death of our lamented brother, only as occasions which Divine Providence has employed as a new setting for the blessed truth, "The Lord is good," &c.

Thus considered, the text comes to us with a solemn and tender emphasis, as reminding us, in various relations, of a great and vital truth.

To those of you who may be numbered with the heretofore impenitent and disobedient hearers of the Gospel, he seems to me to speak with the energy and concern of a dying man; and his language seems to be, "I see you involved in a condition of misery which language is inadequate to describe. The state of a soul, polluted by sin, and under the condemnation of God's holy law, is a cause of trouble that transcends all others. But, though horrible, it is not hopeless. The infinite goodness of God has provided an adequate relief. 'The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe.' 'The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.' 'There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' This trouble I once realized, and this relief I once found, and now I preach to you, dying, the same mighty Deliverer whom I preached to you living. Fly! oh! fly to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope." And if any of you have turned away your ears from the words which fell from his living lips, oh! will you not hear, as descending into the grave he makes one more last effort to save your souls?



But another class was before his mind's eye; and remembering that the children of God are destined to suffer tribulation, his benevolent heart yearning towards those before whom he had gone in and out, ministering the word of God, he breathes out his spirit in one last tender message, as if he had said, "Brethren in Christ, I think of you in all your diversified distresses, but, oh! remember that there is a Rock higher than we. I have found it so in all my life, and realize it gloriously in my death. Parental affection carried me through an anxious journey, to find myself arrested by disease, far, far from home, in the midst of strangers, to meet my death in circumstances that I never contemplated as the circumstances of my last hour. But, blessed be God! 'He will never leave me nor forsake me.' The tender hands which would so lovingly have ministered around my couch at home, are not here indeed, but underneath me are the everlasting arms and the eternal God is my refuge. With you I have often sung, and now I realize it:

'How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith in his excellent word:  
What more can He say than to you He has said,  
You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled!

'In every condition — in sickness, in health,  
In poverty's vale, or abounding in wealth,  
At home or *abroad*, on the land, on the sea —  
As your days may demand, shall your strength ever be.

'The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,  
I will not, I will not, desert to its foes:  
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,  
I'll never, no! never, no! never forsake.'

"The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in him."

Methinks I see him summoning up his heart to the highest exercise of faith and patience, while thinking of the home doomed to the desolation of widowhood and orphanage. He reminds them that the Father of the fatherless and the God of the widow is God in his holy habitation. Trouble deep, peculiar, heart-piercing, is coming upon them, but yet he sees it as a trial which by the grace of God shall only make doubly precious the resources of consolation found in the promises and the presence of a faithful and unchanging God. As if he had said, "My stricken family, the darkness of a hitherto unknown sorrow will settle upon you, but there is light even in that darkness. Will not she who has been the light of my eyes look yet even more steadily and confidently into the reconciled counte-

nance of Him who has said, 'Let thy widows trust in me;' and will not each one of my beloved children open the ear of the soul to God's gracious voice as he says, 'Wilt thou not from this time say unto me, 'My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?''

And doubtless there was another view not excluded from his attention and concern by his circumstances as a dying man. As a Christian and patriot, he was alive to the merits of the struggle which his beloved country was making against violence and wrong. The very occasion of his visit to Virginia, the scenes visible on every hand, reminded him of this great contest. Into the troubles of his bleeding and beleaguered land he was called to enter, not merely in his sympathy with the general misery produced by the devastation of property and the destruction of life effected by the enemy, but these calamities had come very near home. They had fallen upon his friends and kindred; nay, they had reached to his very household. And it is not unreasonable, nay, it is most natural, to believe that in sending his last message to his home, that message was intended to bear upon these public interests. It was intended solemnly and faithfully to remind us where our true strength lies. While he would not have had us foolishly or presumptuously to abate one jot or tittle of the means of defence, yet would he point us, as with his dying hand, to the hills whence cometh our help — as if he had said, "My countrymen, trust not in your bristling bulwarks or in embattled hosts; but put your trust in the Lord your God! There standing, the Confederacy is safe. He in whom you confide will, as with a hook in their nose, lead back your enemies by the way which they came. God will bless you, you and your children: 'God will bless you, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.' 'Trust in Him at all times: ye, people, pour out your hearts before Him.'"

Such, brethren and friends, are the last messages from that faithful, loving, lovely man, whom you have so often heard, but now have heard for the last time; whom you so loved to look upon, but whom you will see no more, until you see his radiant countenance in that blessed assembly where a funeral dirge is never heard — where the tears of bereavement are dried up by the joy of a glorious and everlasting reunion. While we enshrine his memory in our hearts, let us walk in the faith which he taught and exemplified; and, like him, let us in every trouble *fly unto God to hide us!*



## A P P E N D I X .

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JAMES MADISON CHILES was born in Abbeville District, S. C., on the 7th of October, A. D. 1809. His father, long known as Major John Chiles, was a deeply pious man, filling the office of Deacon with commendable fidelity, first in Bethany Church, Edgefield District, and after its constitution, in Horeb Church, Abbeville.

He was baptized in April, 1829; licensed to preach in December, 1830, and ordained in March, 1832. The ministers who took part in his ordination were, W. B. Johnson, Luther Rice, Richard Todd, and Washington Belcher.

He first took charge of Bethany Church, then of Gilgal, and next of Damascus and Beulah. In 1841 he took charge of Horeb, and in 1845 of the Baptist Church in Edgefield village. This connection did not continue beyond the year, for in 1846 he was preaching to the Churches of Mt. Moriah, Beulah and Gilgal. This last Church he served for eighteen years. In 1851 the failure of his health constrained him to relax his ministerial labors. In 1852 he preached at Horeb and Mt. Moriah, and continued this connection till the fall of 1859, when, on account of the health of his family, he removed to Southwestern Georgia. Here his time was fully occupied in preaching. Throughout his ministry he received repeated calls from Churches in his own State, in Georgia, and in other States.

He was first married to Sarah Elizabeth, daughter of L. M. Ayer, Sr., of Barnwell, sister of Hon. L. M. Ayer, member of Congress of the Confederate States. This accomplished and amiable lady did not long survive. She left one son, Lewis, whose death, just as he was completing his fourteenth year, his father was called to deplore.

He was married, a second time, to Frances A. Butler, of Washington, Ga., who, with six children, two sons and four daughters, is left to mourn her and their irreparable loss.

The sickness which terminated his life was contracted in Virginia, while he was waiting upon his older son, who had been severely wounded in the second battle of Manassas. He died in the suburbs

of Warrenton, Va., in a family who bestowed upon him, as they had done upon his wounded son, every possible attention and kindness.

In a consolatory letter written by Rev. J. B. Taylor to the bereaved widow, he says: "You have, then, the sweet assurance that your dear husband is now inheriting the heavenly glory. He was a good man, one who loved the blessed Saviour, and he has gone only a little before us to see His face and to enjoy His glory."

'Happy soul! thy days are ended—  
All thy mourning days below.'

He will sin and suffer no more. For him we cannot weep, but only for ourselves. While he was in my family he seemed to enjoy a high degree of spirituality. The evening before he left for Warrenton, in family worship he read the 46th Psalm, and commented upon it much to the comfort and edification of all. We all felt that we were favored in his short sojourn with us, and hoped soon to see his face again."

Another letter, from Rev. A. H. Spilman, furnishes the following information: "I sat up with him the night previous to his death, and talked as much with him as his strength would allow. \* \* At times he seemed to forget home, friends and everything worldly, and his whole soul would seem to be absorbed in the one great subject of salvation. He talked much of Jesus and his glory, and the glory to be anticipated with him in the last great day. Once or twice during the night he said, 'I see my Saviour, and shall soon be with him. Glory! glory! glory! Blessed be his name!' He looked earnestly into my face at one time and said, 'Brother, do you think that I shall die?' I replied that I did not think that he was very near his end, but that I feared he would not recover. He then said, 'I would like to see my family; but the Lord's will be done.'"

From another letter, written by a gentleman of Georgia, who was then at Warrenton, we have a similar recital in the following words: "Doubtless it would have been a pleasure to Mr. Chiles, and a comfort to his family, if they could have been with him in his last moments. His mind seemed to be absorbed in contemplating the all-sufficiency, the glory and grandeur of the great plan of salvation, and his spirit seemed to go out with earnest and ardent longings toward its Supreme Author. His love for Jesus, he said, was great

because 'He had first loved him.' His mind was clear; not a doubt disturbed the peace of his soul. He said he had attempted to serve Jesus for a long time, but none too long or too much. He manifested great love for all who had the privilege of being with him in his illness — for, privilege it certainly was. None, not the most obdurate, could have witnessed his death unmoved, or repressed within them the desire that their 'last end might be like his.'"

"He suffered but little during his sickness, and none at all that I could discover when he died. He sank gradually, and breathed his last without a struggle."

He died on the 28th of October, 1862, aged 53 years and 3 weeks. His remains were brought to his native State, and lie in the cemetery of Horeb Church.

In the recent proceedings of the Georgia Baptist Convention is a Report on Deceased Ministers, adopted by that body, which concludes as follows: "Rev. James M. Chiles, of the Bethel Association, died at Warrenton, Va., in October last. He had gone there to nurse a sick son, and was himself stricken down by the angel of death. Brother Chiles was a South-Carolinian, and moved to Georgia in 1859. He was licensed in 1830, and ordained in 1832; thus for thirty years was he engaged in preaching Christ. He was amiable in character, urbane in deportment, able in preaching, and highly cultivated in intellect. As a divine, few could rank higher; as an instructive minister, he was rarely excelled; and as a citizen, he commanded the love and esteem of all his acquaintance.

"Though dying in a distant State, he received every attention kindness could bestow, and on his death-bed gave remarkably clear and consoling evidence of the presence of genuine religion in his bosom. In him we have lost a brother long to be remembered, whose place it will be impossible to fill."



